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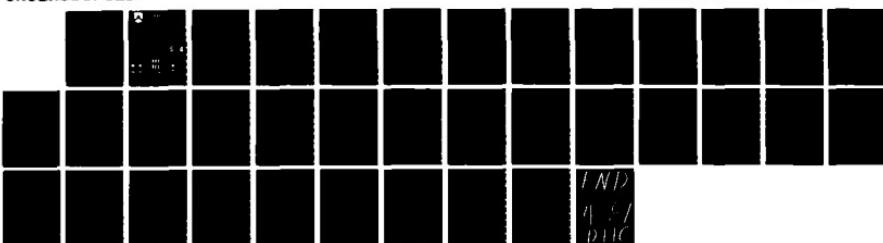
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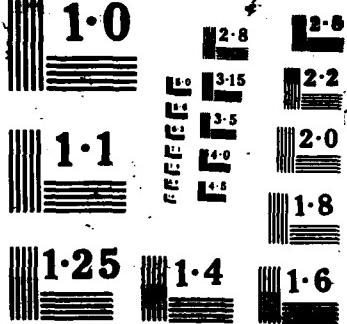
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RESEARCH REPORT

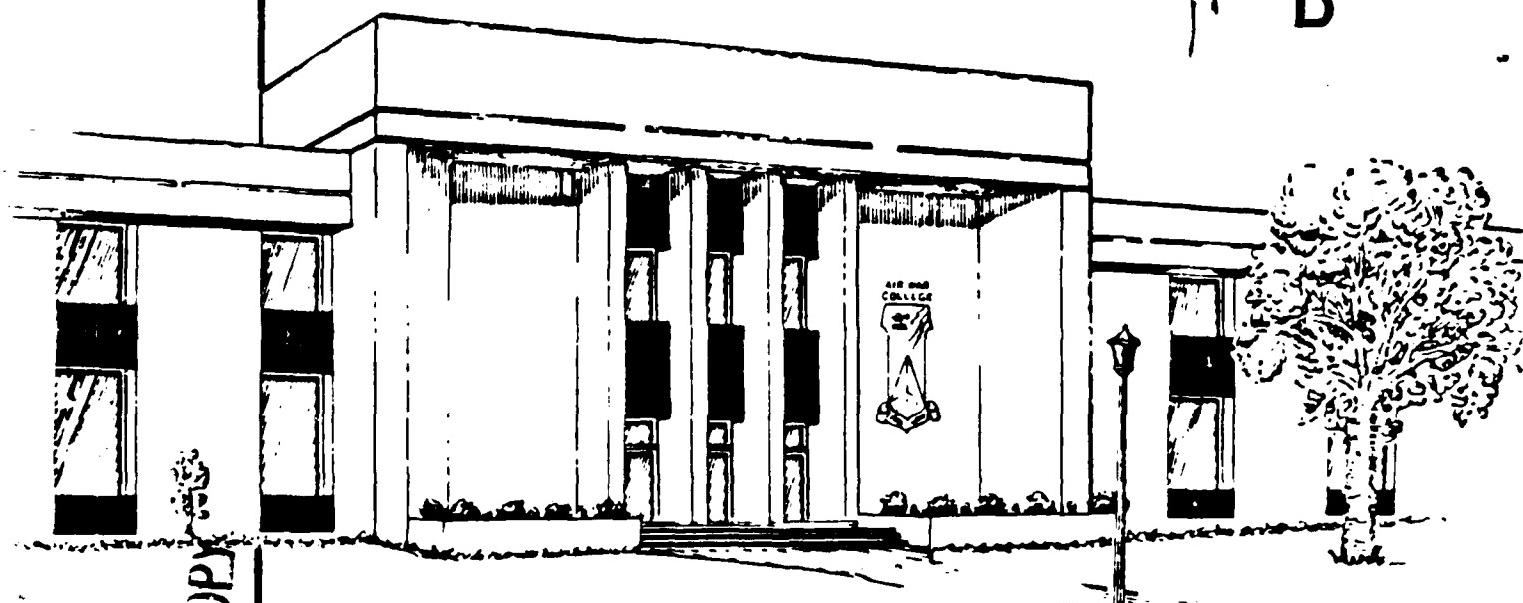
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MOTIVATION AND MANAGEMENT
OF
THE SENIOR LIEUTENANT COLONEL

By LT COL WILLIAM B. ORELLANA

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Air War College
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**Motivation and Management
of
the Senior Lieutenant Colonel**

by

William B. Orellana
Lieutenant Colonel, USAF

A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY
IN
FULFILLMENT OF THE RESEARCH
REQUIREMENT

Research Advisor: Colonel Hans Asmus

MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA

MARCH 1986

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AIR WAR COLLEGE RESEARCH REPORT ABSTRACT

TITLE: Motivation and Management of the Senior Lieutenant Colonel

AUTHOR: William B. Orellana, Lieutenant Colonel, USAF

> The military manager is faced with many challenges. One is certainly motivation and management of personnel. This paper addresses a subset of such challenges, specifically the motivation and management of senior lieutenant colonels. These individuals, nonselected for promotion to colonel but often with several years retainability until mandatory retirement, can be significant contributors to unit productiveness and morale. However, some can also present unique problems for the supervisor or commander. In this paper, the author discusses aspects of personnel management involving these senior lieutenant colonels. Specific subjects are assignment flexibility options and approaches, unit level morale and leadership aspects, motivation techniques, and quality force considerations.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Lieutenant Colonel William B. Orellana has broad experience in personnel management, including aircrew management as a tactical airlift instructor pilot and flight examiner, enlisted force recruitment and retention as a personnel staff officer, officer assignment management as a personnel assignment officer dealing mainly with squadron commander and HQ MAC staff assignment selections, and unit level motivation and management as an operations officer and squadron commander. In addition, he has worked closely with the Air Reserve Forces as the Air National Guard tactical airlift program manager at the National Guard Bureau in the Pentagon. Lt Col Orellana is a Command Pilot with over 4000 hours in tactical and support airlift. He holds a Masters Degree in Industrial Administration from the University of Arkansas and a Bachelors Degree in Chemistry from Allegheny College. He is a graduate of Officer Training School and Squadron Officer School and completed both Air Command and Staff College and the National Security Management Course by correspondence. Lieutenant Colonel Orellana is a graduate of the Air War College, Class of 1986.

I. INTRODUCTION

As commanders and senior managers, Air Force officers are often faced with personnel management situations requiring diverse skills such as motivation, communication, development of commitment in subordinates, selection of the right man for the right job, discipline, and many others which either are naturally ingrained or must be carefully researched and developed. These skills are needed in working with all levels of subordinates, whether it be junior airmen, non-commissioned officers, junior officers, or more senior officers. This paper will deal with facets of these management skills with regard to a very small segment of that population, the senior lieutenant colonel.

For purposes of this discussion, the senior lieutenant colonel is defined as one who has failed promotion at least once to colonel. As of February 1986 there were 2,287 lieutenant colonels in this category, or approximately 21 percent of all Air Force lieutenant colonels. Seventy four percent of those 2,287 were assigned to job levels below the numbered air force. In other words, very few were serving at the policy making staff levels despite their many years experience in the Air Force. In fact, only 26 held positions coded as Headquarters Air Force. These 2,287 lieutenant colonels represent a significant number of years retainability before mandatory retirement, and in

this service will be performed at the Wing, Base, or squadron levels, thus making the resource one demanding innovative management.

Further limiting the scope of this paper, the author will primarily consider those rated senior lieutenant colonels who serve at wing or squadron levels, although all senior lieutenant colonels potentially present equal challenges. The reasons for thus limiting the population are threefold. First, fifty three percent of the senior lieutenant colonels are rated officers, and it is the author's opinion that this group may be the most difficult group within the overall senior lieutenant colonel population to motivate, lead, and manage. Reasons for this belief will be advanced later. Second, at this level the subject population can be extremely beneficial to the Air Force and can have a significant positive impact on the whole as a result of the wealth of experience they represent. It is also at this level that they can have a great negative impact if not effectively channeled and challenged.

A third reason for limiting the subject population stems from the author's personal experience working with and directly managing aspects of this target population's career. This background comes from several years as a junior aircrew member and subsequently as an instructor pilot and flight examiner working on the same squadron and wing level as senior lieutenant colonels. It was further developed as a personnel staff officer at Headquarters

Military Airlift Command involved with career counselling and assignment monitoring for rated positions on the headquarters staff and for squadron commander positions throughout the entire command. While this job dealt primarily with the "still promotable" lieutenant colonel, it provided ample opportunity to work with and counsel the senior lieutenant colonel at the same time. Most recently, the author served as a flying squadron operations officer and commander, directly supervising officers of the subject population. This presented opportunities to observe first-hand their impact on unit mission and morale when effectively or ineffectively employed and motivated.

In order to not limit the perspectives of this paper merely to personal opinions, the author included in the research an informal survey of members of the 1986 Air War College class. This opinion survey was targeted specifically to officers whose past experience included leadership and management positions at wing and squadron levels where they, too, had exposure to various segments of the senior lieutenant colonel population. Those with personnel system management background were also polled. Inputs from the 44 respondents will be included in the discussion of each separate management area and/or problem. The respondents represent a wide variety of commands and weapons systems, and, therefore, can be considered to mirror the opinions of similar mid-level leaders and managers throughout the Air Force.

II. ASSIGNMENT FLEXIBILITY

It is often argued, especially among the officers themselves, that senior rated lieutenant colonels are not given jobs commensurate with their backgrounds and capabilities, especially ones at headquarters and senior staff levels. Presumably, this nonassignment to high level policy making positions is a result of the "failed promotion" to colonel which therefore makes them less acceptable to headquarters staffs and other organizations which prefer to reserve their positions for less experienced, junior, but still promotable officers.

Referring to Air Force Regulation 36-20, paragraph 1-1 states that "The primary objective of the officer assignment system is to assign Air Force officers to enhance effective and sustained mission accomplishment Assignment decisions are based on Air Force requirements, individual qualifications, career development . . ." (11:9) Paragraph 3-1 further states "The primary consideration in the assignment selection process is the officer's current or potential qualifications to fill a valid requirement and the nature of the requirement. All other factors . . . are secondary." (11:55) These sections deal with general assignment policy, but the regulation also includes a discussion specifically considering lieutenant colonels who have not been selected for promotion to colonel. That specific section, paragraph 3-8, states:

"Selection for promotion to colonel is a result of an extremely competitive process, and nonselection should not be used as a basis for determining future assignment potential. Senior managers must use this highly qualified resource to the best advantage of the Air Force and in positions commensurate with their grade, including joint and departmental agencies. Selections for assignment must be based on the individual's performance and record, without regard to promotion status. Consequently, promotion information will not be a factor for consideration in assignment decisions and nonselection to the grade of colonel will not be a basis for denial of assignment." (11:62)

Within the Air Force assignment arena, there are several Air Force, Department of Defense, Major Command (MAJCOM) and other special staff agencies which receive selective manning. This manning is managed by Air Force Military Personnel Center and MAJCOM staffs. Basically, each organization works through the MAJCOM or AF assignment systems and requisitions an officer to fill a vacancy. Personnel assignment staffs then attempt to fill the requisition with the best available individual. Periodically, the best available, most experienced may be a senior lieutenant colonel, but quite often he won't fit all requisition requirements. In the author's opinion, this is the case because most special agencies purposely requisition in such a way that the senior lieutenant colonel could not qualify. They so structure the requisitions in order to reserve their positions for young "fast burners".

In the author's opinion, saving these positions for up-and-coming officers generally is a good policy. The Air Force needs to challenge young

officers with ever-increasing responsibilities in order to determine which ones have the potential to develop into future senior leaders. Besides using these staff positions for experiencing these future leaders, one AWC survey respondent suggested that the senior lieutenant colonel didn't fit or qualify for the billets. He postulated that if our promotion structure is valid, then the senior lieutenant colonel doesn't belong at the higher policy making level such as the special staffs because he doesn't possess the necessary depth and breadth of experience and performance. If he did, he would not be a senior lieutenant colonel, but instead would have been promoted. Therefore, it makes sense to save the majority of the most challenging positions for younger officers with greater potential.

Even with the above in mind, this author contends that there is room to expand assignment opportunities for senior lieutenant colonels. We must challenge these officers and give them chances to contribute and in turn be stimulated professionally. These opportunities should go only to those who definitely display the continuing desire to perform and also only to those who possess particular expertise needed at high levels -- expertise unavailable in the junior officer.

Basically, this involves case-by-case consideration. However, through careful assignment selection, we must send some "example messages." These

can accomplish several things. First, we get an expert in a position where he is badly needed. Next, it may free a wing or base level job which can be used by the up-and-coming captain or major for continued career progression and broadening. It can also minimize the negative factor perceived by the junior officer that the senior lieutenant colonel is blocking his opportunity for advancement. Many junior officers this author counselled believed that they needed key positions within the squadron, then the wing, in order to gain experience and qualify for potential advancement to a headquarters staff. Some perceived "a blockade" with senior lieutenant colonels who filled positions with no near term potential of movement. Similar counselling results were cited by several survey respondents. Some assignments of senior lieutenant colonels out of squadron and wing positions would remove many of these blockades.

Finally, assignments to higher staff levels for senior lieutenant colonels sends the message that the Air Force recognizes the value of these individuals and will use it where needed. In addition, such assignments may make a small contribution toward decreasing the perception that nonselection for promotion to colonel equates to failure. The message instead can be that we have important positions for these officers, positions in which they can have a great impact. Moving them to these critical positions will also allow

the officer to serve his last several years in the Air Force with dignity and not with a nonselection stigma.

Responses to the survey suggested several possible approaches to enhance this assignment policy change. One might be a special assignment monitoring section or an expansion of the responsibilities of current special assignment monitors. Their charge would be to become intimately familiar with the overall resource, especially concentrating on those senior lieutenant colonels who have specific expertise and experience badly needed and rarely found. Those who are serving at squadron levels and whose records still indicate strong performance and motivation should be considered for reassignment. The key here is a renewed emphasis and commitment to place these officers where they can contribute most.

Such an approach requires a mindset change beginning at the top. Those organizations which have select manning must act to change the perception of promotion "failure" in the senior lieutenant colonel by accepting some new assignees. Some assignments may even result in subsequent promotions. Although it could be argued that such promotions would be at the expense of someone coming along in the next group, or at the expense of a younger "up-and-comer," if the first individual was close to a promotion, still works

hard, and deserves the confidence inherent in job selection, then he deserves the resultant promotion.

Another step involves expanding and improving the perception of the jobs senior lieutenant colonels are ultimately given. This is especially important at the wing level. The officers are very visible at this level, and if the job is important and viewed so by the commander, then the commander must accompany job selection with a large measure of recognition. The ultimate purpose of this support and recognition is a loud and clear message that non-promotion does not equate to failure. This will go a long way in the organization, both for the job image and the individual's professional image and self-perception.

When discussing any changes in assignment philosophy for senior lieutenant colonels, we are dealing with a very sensitive issue. We cannot block the paths of junior officers, but we should recognize the expertise of these senior officers. We must be careful not to confuse the system, because those who have not been promoted have already been judged as being on a lower order of merit than those who were promoted. But many deserve additional opportunities to be productive. This can be done while continuing to develop a young, energetic, vibrant force

III. THE SENIOR LIEUTENANT COLONEL AT SQUADRON AND WING LEVELS

In assessing the benefits or drawbacks of having senior lieutenant colonels at squadron and wing levels, one naturally concludes that "it depends." It depends on numbers, quality, contributions, and a whole host of other factors. It is not good to have too many, for too many create roadblocks for junior officer progression. Yet a few experts with a wealth of experience can be extremely valuable. It is not good to have even one malcontent who vocally denigrates the Air Force as a career or the system as it has treated him. Yet the senior lieutenant colonel who accepts his position and makes a niche for his expertise and drive, filling important management roles and willingly tackling tough assignments, sets an example to be followed by peers and younger officers and airmen alike. So much depends on individual cases and individual location.

"Managers are inclined to be very concerned about the unsatisfactory performer as an example to other employees, and this concern is justified. Problem employees . . . create morale problems if they are allowed to get away with slovenly or inadequate input." (17:50) Addressing this specific subject in the AWC survey, the author found that the most often cited problem inherent in having senior lieutenant colonels at squadron level was indeed the potential for causing bad morale. This came from several aspects. One was an unseen

pressure on squadron commanders, operations officers, and other senior leaders in the organization when faced with the motivation and management problems inherent in working with these senior officers. But more significant was the negative effect that the senior lieutenant colonel's presence has on career aspirations of younger officers. This negative effect can result from path blockage, which has been previously cited. It can also stem from a perceived message that long service may only result in return to a status or position enjoyed early in one's career, that is if one spends twenty or more years in the Air Force, he ultimately may end up back where he started. In addition, if these senior field graders are frustrated, upset, and outspoken, they may fail to perform at the level commensurate with their rank and, in fact, may lower their performance to that of the junior officers with whom they closely associate. In these cases, they do not provide much motivation or a positive career example for younger, impressionable officers to follow.

Again from the survey, the most often cited benefit of the senior lieutenant colonel's presence was a technically-based one. Experience and knowledge pools were acknowledged to be great in this resource, and, if tasked to impart that knowledge formally, as in a training squadron, the senior lieutenant colonel at this level can be extremely beneficial. Whether his presence is positive or negative, if nothing else, the senior lieutenant colonel

presents a real-world example for close study by the junior officer. To make this example most beneficial is the unit commander's responsibility.

IV. MOTIVATING THE SENIOR LIEUTENANT COLONEL

Another aspect of management of this important resource follows logically from those areas previously discussed. Whether assignment opportunities are expanded or not, whether the senior lieutenant colonel's presence at a squadron or wing level is good or not, the fact remains that many will, of necessity, fill those very positions. Consequently, it becomes extremely important to motivate these officers, not only for the good of the mission and unit morale, but also for the personal esteem and self-worth aspects of the individual.

The eminent management philosopher and proponent of the human side of management Douglas M. McGregor stated that "the essential task of management is to arrange organizational conditions and methods of operation so that people can achieve their own goals best by directing their own efforts toward organizational objectives." (8:89) Another author has succinctly stated that "if you would motivate someone to achieve the best that is in him, you must first put him in a job that suits his talents . . . Matching peoples' skills to their jobs is vital." (1:3-4) To the extent that each of these statements

frequently are at odds, the challenge of the military manager/leader is to balance motivating conditions with the squadron or wing mission.

In considering the subject senior lieutenant colonel population, we are faced with some new problems. One is nonpromotability itself. In his book *Confronting Nonpromotability*, Edward Roseman wrote that ". . . a natural reaction to nonpromotability is resentment combined with varying degrees of nonacceptance Furthermore, traditional motivational appeals aren't applicable for men and women on the down side of their careers Finally, because the nonpromotable may think of himself as a 'reject', his self-esteem is fragile." (15:23) Often, the individual will ask, "what's the sense of breaking my back and working extra hard when I don't have any chances of advancement in the future?" This is a good question which must be dealt with seriously. Traditionally, many managers "hold that behavior is completely determined by external stimuli, and that our goals essentially are to achieve pleasure and avoid pain." (9:48) A manager normally works to create these external stimuli by using rewards to produce results. One common reward is promotion. But the senior lieutenant colonel is essentially beyond this reward of promotion, and consequently, different motivators must be found.

When searching for these motivators, we must recognize that people differ in several fundamental ways. However, behavior patterns can generally

be divided into studiable groupings, and treatment can be coordinated to target each group. Such treatment essentially must consider three human needs: achievement, power, and affiliation. "By determining and reacting to an individual's needs in terms of the three basic needs, we can influence the individual's behavior." (9:48) A squadron or wing commander might like to have only those people who fit his own particular mold of motivation, drive, enthusiasm, energy, technical ability, etc. assigned to his unit. Obviously, this isn't possible, for the assignment system would require hundreds of personnel changes for each change of command -- and how boring might be the result. In fact, how unimaginative and non-innovative might the organization be as a result. The many differences of human nature give life and forward movement to organizations, and it is precisely these "... countless permutations and circumstances (which) make impossible the development of a general theory of motivation." (9:52) Recognizing that physical rewards may be past and the human needs described above require skillful juggling and manipulation, it is apparent that the military commander has a significant challenge ahead when confronted with motivating the senior lieutenant colonel to contribute positively and actively to the unit mission.

With this in mind, the author asked the AWC survey participants to outline the motivational aspects they considered most important in relation to

the senior lieutenant colonel. By far the most often cited motivating factor was a meaningful job, one which offers the opportunity for measurable, important contributions to the unit mission. Such a job should be more than a similar job filled by a captain or major in the same unit. It should be one which requires spending quality and quantity time, in short one which requires solid effort. In addition, the job should demand thinking and encourage ideas and innovation. If the ideas result in unit mission/training adjustments or policy changes, that's so much better. The key must be that the job leads to a continued feeling of self worth, thus expanding the self esteem of the officer and making it possible for him to see that he is still contributing valuable ideas and actions. Such contributions feed the higher level needs of the individual, needs which, unlike lower echelon, "survival" oriented ones, are seldom completely satisfied. The egoistic needs of self esteem, self confidence, achievement, knowledge, competence, reputation, and status are of concern here, both to the individual worker and the manager. (8.248) Although they are difficult to fully satisfy, any positive steps taken striving to fulfill them can have large benefits.

It is readily apparent that many of these needs -- especially achievement, reputation, and status -- in order to be fulfilled require that a supervisor openly recognize contributions of the individual. Without this

recognition, the achievement or status needs remain only partially fulfilled. This points out the ultimate importance of praise -- the "positive stroke" -- in leading and motivating Air Force personnel. Positive reinforcement "... appears to be a more humane, more effective way of controlling the behavior of alienated workers." (18:36) In fact, the AWC survey respondents highlighted such recognition as the second most influential factor in motivating the senior lieutenant colonel. In their book *In Search of Excellence*, Peters and Waterman stress that it's important to let people think of themselves as winners. Most individuals have a very elevated impression of themselves as better performers in every respect than they really are. Too many organizations fail to recognize this and don't develop feedback systems which build upon this exaggerated self perspective. Instead they often take a negative approach, and emphasize the failures rather than actively rewarding the successes. (12: 56-57) If we want people to do well, it is important to start them out thinking they are doing well. We must recognize the valuable talents senior lieutenant colonels have developed over a long Air Force career, assess this talent to fit them into the important, productive jobs, and then recognize formally and openly their contributions and successes. For the most part, these officers have received positive encouragement throughout their careers, and now they need it even more. We need not bend over backwards with praise. After all, they are adults

who should understand their own motivations and drives. But we can influence those drives by adding the organizational impetus inherent in the "positive stroke." This will help meet some of the individual's needs. The old saying, "you get back what you give," is full recognition that the time and effort demonstrated by the manager will significantly impact the overall product received in return.

Both the important job and personal recognition go a long way in developing motivation. However, we must do even more -- we must create involvement. Give opportunities to share in problem solving and decision making. Ask for advice, especially when decisions will directly affect the individual or the job in which he is most active. These steps will help increase the commitment. (15:93) Asking for advice, however, is not enough. We must go one step further and use that advice. Survey respondents considered this very important. It is one thing to recognize experience and give credit for that experience by seeking out opinions, but it is much more to actually incorporate some of these ideas in the final product. Only then will the individual feel part of the team, one whose value to the organization has been demonstrated by results.

Concerning nonpromotability, Roseman has cited that some individuals "take it in stride. But they are the exceptions. Most, to some extent, are

affected adversely." (15:41) He stresses the importance of understanding the man or woman in this situation, and he says that "to do so, you must be willing to pay more attention to them, take a genuine interest in them . . ." (15:66) Here counselling, face-to-face and pre-planned, so each member understands the significance and the intention of the session, is an important tool which can eventually aid motivation. Such counselling must be conducted by a senior supervisor, and definitely by someone with a full enough knowledge and understanding of the system to speak with credibility. The senior lieutenant colonel must first understand why he wasn't promoted and probably will not be again. Nonpromotability cannot be explained simply; hopefully, the supervisor knows the officer well enough to do more than just evaluate paper records and can expand the counselling into job performance and potential-oriented discussions. It is only fair to the individual to put his mind in order and channel him toward more, or continued, productive participation.

One must be very careful in such a counselling session, however. Many times, nonpromotability may have resulted in current performance weaknesses which led to the counselling session. "Bringing a performance problem to attention can easily generate a defensive reaction, even when the focus is kept on performance and behavior rather than on personality and attitude." (16:111)

The officer may react to protect his self-esteem. Keep the counselling focused on the problem and projected toward future performance successes. A more positive, productive session will result. (16:113)

Realizing one's potential is a shared responsibility of both the supervisor and the subordinate. (15:96) Counselling can reinforce these responsibilities while underscoring and enhancing other motivation efforts as well. In addition, during a counselling session, the supervisor can reduce the situation to the absolute basics, stressing that the officer is still being paid a substantial amount, possibly double that given to a junior officer filling a similar job in the same unit. For that, pride, professionalism, and individual responsibility dictate a solid effort. An effective supervisor can get this point across most strongly in this face-to-face interview.

It is interesting to note that during the deliberations concerning the Defense Officer Personnel Management Act (DOPMA), Congress felt strongly enough about the importance of counselling that they directed "each service establish within its personnel department a program to provide counselling to passed-over officers." (6:22) They stipulated that such a program should be for grades O-3 through O-6 and that the counselor should point out areas which might account for noncompetitiveness. Congress' language stipulated that the

services should report back within nine months after bill passage outlining such a program and through it the progress being made toward achieving better understanding of the system. (6:23) This same suggestion was included in the Senate form of DOPMA as late as 1980. (7:20) However in its final form, DOPMA, included in the current US Code, has no mention of this counselling procedure. This author believes that such counselling is an extremely important and effective management tool which can contribute greatly to the future productivity of the senior lieutenant colonel.

In the final analysis, survey respondents considered that many efforts to make better-than-average performers out of senior rated lieutenant colonels would fail; consequently, they suggested that in these cases the best possible motivation and utilization would be gained by "keeping them flying." This recognizes that most flying is fun, is what the officer has done most throughout his career, and is probably the area where he has the most expertise. In fact, these very officers, in today's demographics, may be the last ones with actual combat experience and, therefore, may be the last ones who can offer the old "there-I-was hangar-flying classroom" to up-and-coming aviators. Flying may not be a good motivator in all cases. The officer himself may not feel this is his strong suit. In addition, in some missions, tactical and strategic airlift for example, flying may require significant amounts of time

away from home and family, the very things which may have negatively affected family life at earlier stages of his career. But with proper emphasis on job importance from the commander, this can again be a recognition that the meaningful job -- the training of junior aircrew members -- can also be the one which best motivates the individual and provides the forum for making meaningful inputs through effective use of valuable talents.

In considering all these motivation factors, we must realize that no two people can be led or managed in exactly the same way. It is a delicate balance to be crafted by the commander or supervisor. The above guidelines can help, and they may be effective in the majority of cases. However, innovation in leadership is the watchword. Set a strong example and require results, and this valuable resource, the senior lieutenant colonel, will produce.

V. ENFORCING QUALITY FORCE

After all motivation efforts have been expended, very occassionally a commander is confronted with a nonproductive senior lieutenant colonel who doesn't "pull his weight." A very few may go so far as to be charged with misconduct, moral or professional dereliction, or be considered a risk to national security. In such cases, Chapter 60, Section 1181 of the US Code, provides for a special board of officers which can be convened at the direction of the service secretary to review the officer's record and determine whether

he should be required, because his performance of duty has fallen below standards, to show cause for his retention. (19:237) As might be expected, this is a seldom invoked procedure, and performance factors must be significantly negative to warrant its use.

More often, the officer who doesn't "pull his weight" does not warrant such drastic charges. However, he may still be a burden to an organization, contributing little while requiring entirely too much supervision. Many mid-level managers believe that a small number of senior lieutenant colonels, particularly at squadron and wing levels, become nonproductive, negative influences, regardless of the motivation or leadership efforts expended by their commanders. Roseman cited such individual's as being "in the fixation stage of their careers . . ." (15:120) They often try to avoid accountability, won't take any initiative, won't attempt any innovations, and often become defensive, minimizing the impacts of errors or trying to rationalize mistakes as less important than they are. (15:121-122) These very actions are anathema to mission accomplishment and morale in the squadron and certainly do not represent actions one should expect from a senior field grade officer. AFR 36-20, para 3-2 specifically states "All officers are responsible for meeting Air Force quality standards. Those who do not, and those whose performance or

conduct is substandard, should be placed in rehabilitative programs, disciplined, or separated from the Air Force."

Of management concern here is that such officers may remain in their position and in the Air Force through guaranteed tenure for some time after developing this work, or nonwork, ethic. DOPMA, during its development from 1974 until 1980, recognized an existing disparity among the services regarding tenure for lieutenant colonels and consequently suggested that 26 years (the tenure used by the Navy and Marine Corps at the time) become the standard for all services. House iterations of the proposed legislation continued to suggest 26 years, but the Senate version in 1980 inexplicably changed the suggested tenure to 28 years. (7) The House versions, which had been backed by the Department of Defense, were not enacted upon, and subsequently DOPMA became law with 28 years as tenure for lieutenant colonels. This factor is significant, since a lieutenant colonel may serve for more than five years after nonselection for promotion to colonel before reaching this 28 year tenure point. If he has become one of those "dissatisfieds" described above whose contributions to unit cohesiveness and mission accomplishment are either nonexistent or negative, then the unit, and indeed the Air Force, is "stuck" with a malcontent who is drawing an excellent pay check for little pay back.

Reviewing pre-DOPMA force management proposals, it is interesting to note that some strong "attacks" at guaranteed tenure had periodically surfaced. The Bolte Committee, an ad hoc committee which studied the officer management system in 1960, included a statement that the services should "not provide sinecures for officers . . . and that officers once promoted (should) not be assured unconditional tenure in grade." (2:3) Their recommendation to alleviate this situation was that lieutenant colonels who had failed promotion to the then temporary grade of colonel two times be retired unless selected for continuation on active duty. (2:128-129) Essentially, they advocated a selecting-in program to replace the existing guarantee. Following the Bolte study, another committee considered similar personnel management actions. This study, known as the Proposed Officer Management System Study, was the immediate pre-cursor to DOPMA. It carried a similar proposal for separation of twice deferred lieutenant colonels not selected for continuation. (13:VII-1-2) In both cases, these efforts recognized that quality should be a requisite to serve a maximum career.

In 1973, the DOD Officer Personnel Management Study Group, put the cards on the table, stating:

Establishing assured tenure to specified years of service requires that officers twice failed to the next higher grade be retained on active duty

without regard for their individual capabilities, the availability of suitable assignments, or the need for reasonable flow in the promotion system. Therefore . . . a feature is needed . . . to give the Military Department Secretary selectivity in determining which officers should be continued on active duty to the maximum years of service. (14:26-27)

A provision along these lines does exist in DOPMA, but it is so structured that it doesn't easily provide for management of the few who should be "selected out for quality."

With this in mind, the author asked survey participants if they believe the Air Force needs a quality screening program to help ensure only those senior lieutenant colonels who provide positive contributions remain on active duty. Three-quarters of the respondents stated the Air Force should have such a program. Several voiced concerns that many senior lieutenant colonels no longer work at the level of energy expected for the pay received, but instead have reverted to levels of performance normally expected of a more junior officer who also receives lesser remuneration. One would hope professionalism and self esteem at the least would limit this occurrence, but when that fails the Air Force suffers. To solve this problem, the suggestions outlined below may form a framework for in-depth study.

The current Officer Effectiveness Report (OER) system should be amended for lieutenant colonels who have been twice nonselected for promotion to colonel. A separate section should be developed whose input

comes primarily from the lowest supervisory level knowledgeable about the officer's performance, but no lower than the squadron commander. This section should be a "closed form" with the primary purpose being a recommendation either for retention or separation. It should be indorsed by the next higher supervisor in the chain of command and no higher. This would force the individuals with direct responsibility for motivation and utilization to make the "tough decision," but also would put the responsibility at the level where first hand knowledge is strongest and where the impacts of performance are best known and most felt.

Another step should involve an unbiased, neutral board for review. There are many ways this could be done. One might be an adjunct to each year's colonel selection board, charged to review qualifying records and with the power to separate those who have been so recommended and whose records corroborate that recommendation. Current legislation provides for a similar board which, when convened, must retain not less than 70 percent of those considered. Once recommended for continuation under these proceedings, an officer is not eligible for consideration by a similar subsequent board sooner than the fifth fiscal year after the date of the first board's approval. (19.110) This procedure is primarily intended for use in a reduction of force and has seldom been implemented. It should assume that all officers are basically

qualified to continue, but some must be separated for the purpose of "balancing the books." The author's "quality of force" board, on the other hand, would assume that some officers do not deserve to be continued and therefore should be separated for the "good of the service." This review should take place yearly. The philosophy difference is the key.

This is an emotional issue and one which would require legislative action. However, an officer should not be guaranteed 28 years of service merely because he has "stayed out of trouble." Our public servants owe performance for the guarantee of tenure, and if that performance is not forthcoming, we should have an effective method of quality control.

VI. CONCLUSION

In summation, senior rated lieutenant colonels can play major roles throughout the remainders of their careers. These roles can be positive -- beneficial to their unit's missions and morale -- or they can be negative -- detrimental to the unit's cohesiveness and accomplishments. The Air Force assignment process can have a significant impact on the eventual roles played by this valuable resource. To best accomplish this, some greater realization and acceptance of the experience base and contribution potential of these officers must be accomplished. Placing officers in assignments which will recognize their background is essential. At the same time, once that

assignment level is found, commanders and supervisors must carefully assess the most effective motivation practices and use these to keep the senior lieutenant colonels producing top quality results and furnishing innovation through initiative. If all motivation attempts are unsuccessful, and if an officer falls into that mode where only minimum effort is expended to merely "stay out of trouble" without contributing positively, then a quality screen is necessary to "weed" those from the ranks of the professionals. With all these factors working together, our Air Force will take greater steps toward insuring that superior individuals outnumber the less effective ones.

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4 - 87

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